

THE
REMONSTRANCE
OF THE
PRESBYTERIE
OF
STERLING,

AGAINST
The present Conjunction with the
MALIGNANT PARTY.

TO THE
Commission of the KIRK at
St. Johnston.

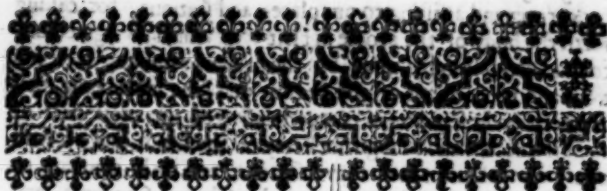


Edinburgh, Printed by Evan Tyler, 1671.

THE
REMONSTRANCE
OF THE
PRESBYTERIAN
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Reverend Brethren,



Having received from you a Letter importing, that in regard of the Kings Majesty and Parliament are to call forth the body of the People, throughout the parts of the Kingdom, which are yet free from the oppression of the Enemy, in a more generall way then hath been heretofore, for the defence and deliverance of the Kingdom from the publique Enemy, as will be made known in our severall bounds by the Orders of Parliament, and earnestly desiring us to contribute, according to our places and stations, our best endeavours, that all persons, called for by Authority, may come readily for so necessary and pious a Service, and that we will be careful to appoint so many Ministers to attend the Forces as the Officers of the Regiments, or severall Bands, shall require; we having endeavoured after seeking directions from him who is the Father of Lights impartially and in the simplicity of our hearts, according to our weak measure what we ought to do hertin, and after pondering the same in our spirits, and debating it one with another, and incerning our selves in the whole matter, both from your Answer to the Parliaments Querie in the particular, and from the Act of Levies, which doth contain the Orders, and Resolutions of the Civill Authority thereanent; We cannot finde clearness in

our Judgements, nor satisfactions to our Consciences, to be concurring and assisting to our places and stations, for calling forth the body of the people in that way which is agreed unto, and condescended upon by the present publique Resolutions and Proceedings of the Iudicatories, the same being such as to our understanding is comprehensive of the most part of the dis-affected and Malignant Party of the Land, and of such as are scandalous in their conversations, and walk contrary to the Gospel, and of such as are under Church Censures, and were in the late Rebellion; nay, of the most part of the men of blood, who followed *James Graham*, and shed so much of the blood of the Lords People throughout the Land; the acceptions which are contained in your Answer to the Parliaments *Querie*, and in your Act of Levie being comprehensive but of very few, and therefore cannot be but stumbled at by us for these Reasons. First, Because this way seems to us to be inconsistent with the fourth Article of the Covenant, the scope and intention whereof, to our capacity, is not only the debarring such persons from employement and trust, but a further degree of duty, tending to a greater distance with them, to wit, the discovering and bringing of them to punishment, and therefore, as we conceive, did the Generall Assembly in the year 1648. in their Declaration against the unlawful Engagements, charge these who carried on the same, with the breach of that Article of the Covenant, because they did look upon these, who were by that Article declared Enemies Incendiaries and Malignants, as Friends and Associates, and did employ sundry of them in places of Trust in the Army and Committees. Secondly, It seemed to us to be contrary to the constant tenour, and whole current of the publique Resolutions, Declarations, Warnings, Supplications, and Causes of publique Humiliations, emitted by the Generall Assemblies and Commissioners, now these many years past; we shall name and hint but at few of these which are most obvious to us, and do most stick with us: First, The Declaration of the Assembly 1648. doth hold forth the Engagement, that was then carried on, to be unlawfull; not only in regard of the end thereof

thereof, but also in respect of the means and wayes of prosecuting the same, because there was not an equall avoiding of Rocks on both hands, but a joyning with Malignants to suppress Sectaries, a joyning hand with a black Devill to suppress a white Devill, an endeavouring so to cure one disease, as to breed another as evil or worle, (*pag. 16. as the Declaration stands in the Printed Acts of the Assembly*) in which it is also complained of, that not only many known Malignants, but divers who joynd in the late Rebellion in this Kingdom were then imployed and put in places of Trust, (which is the matter of the sad complaints of this time) and therefore seemed to us that the same places of Scripture, which are there brought to prove the unlawfulness of such proceedings at that time, do also speak much against the present business. Secondly, the Solemn Acknowledgment of publique sins, is so clear and peremptory in this thing, that it makes us tremble to think upon it; We desire to remember these words of the 6. Page of the same, *Should we again break his Commandment and Covenant, by joyning once more with the people of this abomination, and take into our bosoms these Serpents, which had formerly sting'd us almost unto death, this as it would argue great madness and folly on our part, so no doubt if it be not avoided will prevoke the Lord against us to consume us till there be no remnant nor escaping in the Land?* and offers to consideration the 6. Article of the Solemn Engagement, which for avoiding tediousness we spare to repeat: Thirdly, The Declaration of the Generall Assembly, emitted upon the report of this Enemies invading of this Kingdom, bears *pag. 6.* that it is far from their meaning, that any who are tainted with Malignancy and dis-affection to the Work of God should be allowed or permitted to associate, or joyn themselves together by parties in Armes, much less, say they, do we mean that we should associate with them, or that they should be imployed or made use of, or countenanced or permitted to be in our Armies; and this they strengthen and confirm by severall Arguments, and conclude that it shall be a shame for any in this Land to be so faithless and unbelieving, as because of the scarceness

ness of men to make use of such, which testimony is of the more weight with us, because it was at such a time when there were but very small hopes that any considerable number of Forces could be in readiness and gotten together to meet that Enemy. Fourthly, the Generall Assembly, a little thereafter in their Answer to the Declaration of the Parliament of *England*, upon the marching of their Army into *Scotland*, in the two last *Pages* thereof, gave large and serious warning to the King and Committee of Estates, to take heed of snarers from the Malignant Party, and say, there is the more reason at this time not to *own* Malignants, because it is an ordinary form to be so taken with the sense of the danger that is before them, as not to look back to that which is behind them, and that though there may be inclinations in some to employ these men, yet God hath hitherto cursed all such Counsels, and blasted such resolutions, and if we shall again fall in that sin as our guilt shall be so much the greater by reason of so many promises and engagements to the contrary, so we may expect a heavier Judgement from the Lord upon it. Fifthly, As compliances with, countenancing and employing Malignants hath been often and solemnly confessed to God as one of the predominant and publick sins of this Land; so in the first publique Humiliation and Fast, that was kept after the Defeat at *Dunbar*, the obstructing of the purging the Army from Malignants and scandalous persons, and great inclinations to keep in, and fetch in such, as though the Land could not be defended without them, and great repining and crying out against all that was done to the contrary, is reckoned amongst the causes of that sad Judgement and heavy stroke, and even in that Humiliation which hath been lately kept in reference to the King and his Family, his joyning with Malignant and perverse men (many of them being the same who are now allowed to rise in Armes) is reckoned amongst the Causes for which he is to mourn before God. Sixtly, when a Query was propounded by the Kings Majesty to the Commission which sat at *Stirling* about the end of *September*, tending this way, albeit the Straits of the Kingdom were then very great, both from the publique enemy, and from
many

many of the Malignant Party, who were then threatening to rise in Armes, as afterwards they did yet would they not give way to the same, but gave this Answer, that it would be dangerous and scandalous to recede from former principles and resolutions, and in the Remonstrances lately given in by you, to the Kings Majestie and Honourable Estates of Parliament, it is your desire unto them that they would go vigourously about the purging of their Forces from all scandalous and dis-affected persons, many of which are like to be brought in the way that is now taken. Thirdly, we conceive such a way to take inevitably along with it a very eminent danger to the Covenant and Cause of God, and Work of Reformation in these Kingdoms, not only by provoking the Lord to withdraw his countenance and influence from our Councels and Actings, and to power out more wrath upon us; but because these men getting power into their hands cannot but imploy the same, according to their own principles, and for attaining and establishing their own ends, which since the beginning of the Work of God in these Lands have always been known and acknowledged by all the Lovers thereof, to be destructive unto the same upon which account it was that the Commission of the General Assembly 1648. makes it one of their desires to the Parliament, that the Instruments which were to be employed in that, be rightly qualified, which desires have been since that time upon severall occasions often renewed, both by the Generall Assembly, and by their Commissioners, and found so necessary for the preservation of Religion and Righteousness in the Land, that both Kirk and State, according to their respective stations and interests, have passed severall Acts relating to the right qualification of Instruments. Fourthly, we are afraid that this way will be very scandalous and offensive to the most of all the Religious and Godly of the Land, and that as it shall put power in the hands of ill-affected and scandalous men, for ouing such of known integrity

as are in trust in Iudicatories and in the Army, and for prosecuting and oppressing others of them throughout the Land, so it shall also prove such a stumbling to these who are tender, as to make either their hearts to faint and their hands to fail in the discharge of their trust in the Army, or else wholly to quit their charges and retire into corners: Firstly, it seems to make void the strength of severall of these Answers given by this Kirk and Kingdom to the objections of the adversaries concerning their accession to the unlawfull Engagement, to the promoting of a Malignant Party and interest, and to contribute to the justifying of their Quarrell, and will no doubt much harden and heighten them in their hopes and resolutions against this Land. Sixtly, this seemeth to us to be the accomplishment of that designe for taking in the Malignant Party, which hath for a long time been driven at, and endeavoured both at home and abroad with much wit and industry, by many turnings and windings, and by arguments of severall kindes, as the exigency and the advantages of the times did furnish, but was alwayes hitherto resisted and testified against. Seventhly, we are afraid that this way increaseth the Lords indignation and controverſie against the Land, and to the plaguing of us, yet seven times more, a continued tract of dispensations now for a long time in all the three Kingdoms, do prove that the indignation of the Lord is pursuing that generation: and never did we hitherto comply with them and prosper, but such carnall counsell and confidence hath alwayes been blasted unto us of God, and proven bitter in the latter end; Nay, hath not this Kirk and Kingdom Printed and published to the world that the staff in the hands of the enemy, with whom they have now to do, is the indignation of the Lord against the Malignant Party, for crushing of whom God hath put power in the hands of these men, and what then may we fear after so manifest and open conjunction with them, and employing of them, neither doth the necessity that is pleaded for

for it, clear us in these things: We remember in the 1646. or thereabouts, albeit necessitie was pleaded by the Committee of Estates, for the Capitulation with *James Graham* and his Adherents, yet that did not hinder the Commission to bear testimony against the pardoning of them, which was much lesse then the imploying, and trusting of them, and some of these Passages and Papers which we have already cited, speaketh against the imploying of them in our Armies in defence of the Kingdom against the Enemy, even in the case of scarcenes of men, and holdeth it forth as a fruit of unbelief, and tells us, that the Lord has not only spoken it in his Word, and verified it in his Work in dayes of old, but hath let us see it with our eyes, that it is all one to save with many or with few, and that a few whom God will countenance, are of more worth then many against whom he hath a controversie: and the Lord hath lately written such a Demonstration of it in our blood at *Dunbarton*, as may convince both us & the following Generations, of the vanitie of multitudes of men, not that we think that God is to be temptred, but we humbly conceive that there be yet as many against whom there could be little or no exception, even in those places of the Land where the Enemies have not yet come, as a people engaged in a Covenant with God, and following their duty, and professing to act by Faith, and blessed in former times with so many gracious experiments of his countenance and assistance, when they kepted his way, who might have hazarded against the Enemy, with probable hope of success; and though there had been a great disproportion of numbers, yet give us leave to say without offence, that there would have been much more peace and comfort in this way what ever had been the event, then to hazard upon a thing which is involved in so many snares, and is attended with so great dangers to the Cause of God, and so great scandal and grief of heart to many of the poor people of God throughout the Land, and the lawfulness of which, even in the case of necessitie, is at the best very questionable, and to

us so dark, that we do not yet see how any necessity can sufficiently iustifie the employing of those for the defence of the Kingdom, whose principles, and designs, and practices tend to the destroying of the Cause. If such men get power in their hands and prosper, we leave it to you to judge, what is to be expected from them in reference to the Cause and People of God: and when these shall be in hazard, we know not how the Kingdome can be saved: Nay we are afraid, that this way shall even in regard of the outward means, as much weaken, as strengthen our Army, by laying such a stumbling-block in the way of men of unquestionable integritie among the Forces, as shall make them rather chosse to retire and suffer, then to act in such fellowship; what we have spoken in reference to the necessitie of this thing, is not as that we meared to derogate from, or to encroach upon the Civil Authoritie to whom it is incumbent to judge hereof, but to exercise that judgement which is undoubtedly competent to us for satisfying our own Consciences, especially in such things wherein our concurrence is desired, and which do relate so nearly to the Covenant and Cause of God; upon which ground also it was, that the Commission of the Generall Assembly did desire, that the Parliament would satisfie and clear them in the lawfulnessse and necessitie of the War; and it doth not help any thing to our satisfaction, that the busines (as your Letter to us, and your Answer to the Parliaments Querie doth import) is stated upon the defence of the Kingdome onely, without the mentioning of the Cause: We acknowledge that such persons are not fit to be employed in the defence of the Cause, but cannot conceive how the Kingdome and Cause in this busines can be well separated, unlesse it be granted, that those against whom we now fight, are not Enemies unto, nor Invaders of the Cause, but of the Kingdome onely, which may minister advantage unto them, and be inductive to others to comply with them, to the prejudice of the Kingdome, as being of lesse value and importance

portance then the Cause. The Kirk and Kingdom of *Scotland* these twelve years past, hath not at any time separated the Cause and the Kingdom; and we cannot but profess, that we are sorry that this is now done, this has been for a long time endeavoured by the Adversaries and Under-miners of the Cause, to put Religion out of the quarrell, that they might the more easily take latitude to themselves for attaining their own ends, which was discerned and challenged by the Commission of the General Assembly in their Declaration of the first of *March* 1646. and the Commission of the Assembly in *June* last, thought fit upon the down-coming of this Enemie, to give this as a necessary and Seasonable Warning to all the Members of this Kirk, that they would beware of the changing of the state of our Cause, and altering the matter of our quarrell, either by laying aside of Gods interest, and taking up of mans, or preferring or equaling mans interest unto Gods, and doth hold it forth as a thing that would turn up side down the whole tenor of our Principles and Proceedings: We are far from thinking, that it was in the purpose or intention of the Commission, by mentioning the defence of the Kingdom only, to bring any prejudice to the Cause; But we do in humility lay before you the dangers and disadvantages that does redound to the same by so doing, for these and some other reasons which we now fort ear, as having already exceeded the length of a Letter. These grounds of our dissatisfaction, which we do not mention for any other end, then for exonerating our own consciences, and rendering a reason of our judgement unto you, who have demanded our concurrence in the business; We shall only beg leave to add, that before any thing relating thereto be further pressed upon us, we desire and expect satisfaction in these things, & we humbly conceive, that in a point of such importance, which hath bin so long, & so clearly & universally declared and testified, preached and engaged against by this Kirk, it will be needful for satisfaction of our Consciences, & the Consciences of others of the Ministers
and

the same or the like, in a clear and convincing way, and to give such reasons and arguments as may make it appear, that there is no snare, nor scandall, nor sin in this thing, but that it is duty allowed and approved of God, in following of which we expect his blessing. We commend you to God, and rests your affectionate Brethren of the Presbytery of *Stirling*:

Mr David Bennett Moderator.

Mr John Graymaddell.

Mr James Gubrie.

Mr James Simson.

Mr Robert Wright.

Mr Tho. Hogg.

WE have also considered that part of your Letter, relating unto the Act concerning complying with the Enemy, and your desire thereunto, which we shall be carefull to satisfy, in causing read the same in our severall Congregations. We know none in our bounds which doth comply with that Enemy, unless the paying of Cesse (by those of *Leith*, *Denbisse*, and *Bothwell*, who are under their feet) be compliance, concerning which, we humbly desire to hear your judgements.

Stirling, 31. Decemb. 1650.

**Endowed, To: Reverend their
remnant of their Brethren of the
Commission of the Kirk.**

Not to mention the Remonstrance of the Gentlemen and Ministers attending on those Forces, which were in the West under *Cole Key*; The like dissent having been certified by some particular Presbyteries in the West and North.

F I N I S.

